

Engl. Theat vol 379
THE

Fatal Extravagance:

A

TRAGEDY.

Presented at the THEATRE ROYAL
in *Lincolns-Inn-Fields*, in One Act; but, in
this FOURTH EDITION, improv'd into
Five Acts, by the Addition of several
New Characters, and Episodical Inci-
dents.

By JOSEPH MITCHELL.

————— *Neque enim lex æquior Ulla,
Quam necis Artifices Arte perire Sua.*

Ovid.

————— *Quis talia fando
Temperet a Lachrymis?* —————

Virgil.

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. Millan at Locke's-Head in Shug-Lane,
near the upper End of the Hay-Market; and sold
by J. Stagg in Westminster Hall, and N. Blandford
at the London Gazette, Charing Cross. 1726.

(Price One Shilling)

THE
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TRAGEDY

Printed at the Theatre Royal
the Theatre Royal
Five Acts
1840



By J. O. P. N.

Printed by J. O. P. N.

L O N D O N
Printed for J. O. P. N. in Great Britain
near the Theatre Royal



TO THE
Most Noble PRINCE,
J A M E S,
DUKE HAMILTON,
DUKE of BRANDON, &c.

May it please your GRACE,

FIVE Years have pass'd, since I
had the Honour to inscribe the
Fatal Extravagance, a Tragedy,
to your illustrious Name. As your Grace
was then a Minor, so I was but a No-
vice in PARNASSUS; for that was
my Muse's first Essay in *Dramatic Poe-*
try, and well might be styl'd a *pigmy*

4 DEDICATION.

Composition, as Mr. MIST was pleased to distinguish it, in one of his Weekly Lucubrations. Nevertheless, under your *Grace's* auspicious Influence, and by the Town's Indulgence, it *took*; and I was encouraged to make new Attempts in the *Dramatick* Way — particularly, to make the foresaid little Tragedy more fashionable, by improving it from one Act to five, with the Help of some new Characters, which I have leisurely drawn, and connected in the old Fable. But, whether the supplemental Incidents are natural, and the Whole wrought in the same Spirit, as the single Act was, is now submitted to the Publick. Men may discern my Diffidence of the Performance, and of its Reception, from the Application I am forc'd to make again to your *Grace*, for your Sanction to It, and your Patronage to My self. As I cou'd not with Honour address another Great Man on this Occasion, neither cou'd I hope such certain Favour and Success elsewhere.

MAY

D E D I C A T I O N. 5

MAY it, therefore, please your *Grace*, to consider me now with the same Indulgence, you was formerly pleas'd to vouchsafe me. Your *Grace*'s great Judgment will, on a slight Perusal, be able to determine whether I have fail'd your Expectations, or deserve a Continuance of your Regard. I am sure I must have little Merit, if I have not improv'd on your *Grace*'s early Encouragement of my *Muse*.

I SHOU'D, according to Custom, tell your *Grace* a great deal concerning your Family! your Fortune! your Person! your Parts! what you are, and what is expected of you! — But these are Topicks too much prostituted to please: Besides, tho' I cou'd say much without Flattery, it might be consider'd in that Light by the World, and especially by one of your *Grace*'s own Modesty and Taste. Give me Leave only to conclude with a Paragraph, or two, of the

6 D E D I C A T I O N.

Dedication I made of this Tragedy in Miniature, and withal to appeal to Mankind, whether the Sequel might not be prophetic of your *Grace's* present and future Excellence ?

How blest shou'd I conceive my self, might I ever become worthy the Regard of a Patron, the very Dawn of whose Life, is breaking out upon the World, with a stronger Lustre, from his Merit, than it receiv'd, from his State.

I SNATCH'D this Opportunity, to acknowledge my Devotion to your *Grace's* Name and Family, and to stand out the first publick Predictor, that your innate Princely Qualities will render you of more Consequence to your Country, than the splendid Advantages of your Title, and great Power.

So glorious a Conjunction of happy Circumstances, must be the Blessing of your *Grace's* own Life, the Honour and
good

DEDICATION. 7

good Fortune of your Friends and Dependants, and the universal Admiration of the Country, that lays Claim to you. A Country ! which, I am sure, you will adorn, by your Councils, and your Actions, after a Manner, which has never yet been reach'd, even by the Brave and Illustrious, long, Line of your Predecessors.

MAY the kindest Care of Heaven preserve your important Life from all Dangers, and ill Accidents, to be the Ornament of your own Age, and the great Example and Emulation of Posterity !

I am, with the profoundest Duty and Respect,

May it please your Grace,

Your Grace's most Obedient,

and most Devoted,

Humble Servant,

JOSEPH MITCHELL.

THE DUTY OF A
GOOD FORTUNE, your Honor and Do-
pendance, and the universal Admiration
of the Country, that lays Claim to you.
A Country which I am sure you will
show to your Councils, and your Ac-
tione, after a Manner, which has never
yet been reached; even by the Brave and
Illustrious, Lord, Lord of your Proce-
dure.

May the kind Care of Heaven
preserve your Honor at the time from all
Dangers, and all Accidents, to be the Or-
nament of your own Age, and the great
Example and Emulation of Posterity.

I am, with the profoundest Duty and
Respect,
Your most Obedient Son,

JOSEPH MITCHELL

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PROLOGUE.

Written by AARON HILL, Esq;

Spoken by Mr. RYAN.

*W*Arm'd, by a Kindred Sense of England's Woes,
A Caledonian Muse, with Pity, glows;
From ruin'd Hopes, a saving Moral takes,
And paints th' Unhappy, for the Happy's Sakes.
Scotland's new Tasse our meaning Scene supplies,
And a first Flight, on Tragick Pinions, tries.
Brave, and long fam'd in Arms, her warlike Race
Have trod the Fields of Death, with dauntless Grace!
Fierce, and untir'd, in Blood, have nobly dar'd,
And every Toil, and every Danger, shar'd.
Now, fir'd by rising Arts, she grasps the Bays,
And her old Cant, like falling Stocks, decays.
Her long-lost Muse new-lights her ancient Flame!
And our Scene blazes, with recover'd Fame.

We teach, to Night, --- ah! would 'twere not too late,
How, rash, believing Avarice galls a State;
What private Sorrows, from wild Hazards, flow,
And how false Hope produces certain Woe.

This, the most natural Business of the Stage,
Will all your generous Hearts, tis hop'd, engage:
None can their Pity, for those Woes conceal,
Which most, who bear, perhaps, too deeply, feel.
The Rants of ruin'd Kings, of mighty Name,
For pompous Misery, small Compassion claim.
Empires o'erturn'd, and Heroes, held in Chains,
Alarm the Mind, but give the Heart no Pains.
To Ills, remote from our Domestic Fears,
We lend our Wonder, but withhold our Tears.

Not so when, from such Passion, as our own,
Some Favourite Folly's dreadful Fate is shown;
There the Soul bleeds, for what it feels within:
And conscious Pity shakes at suffering Sin.

O! give Attention, to the moving Scene,
And shun what yet may be, by what has been.

EPI-

THE
EPILOGUE.

Written by AARON HILL, Esq;

Spoke by Mrs. SEYMOUR.

YOU've seen the Play — and I'll unfold the Poet,
To whom, (stray'd Sheep, of a Pure Flock!) we owe it.
He's a Chance-Blessing — somewhat strangely flung us!
Dropt from the Clouds of Innocence, among us!
Slipt, thro' the Kirk's loose Pale, We gave him Quarter —
Poor Soul! He had like to've been the Muse's Martyr.
When Stage-Plays! and Abominations! took him,
Grace, and the Shepherds of the Saints forsook him.
'Twas given, thenceforth, to Satan's Power, to win him:
— The Root of the Sound Matter was not in him!
Yet, tho' rebuk'd, full sore, he's no huge Sinner —
You'll scarce see One of his pure Brethren — thinner.
Most sanctify'd of Face! Truth — I'm afraid,
If his Looks lie not — the poor Man's a Maid!

The Bard, not carnal-minded, (say the Curious,)
How come th' unlesbly Folks, to be so furious?
Judge you the Quarrel, right. — we'll, briefly, show it. —
— Good plays give good Instruction, said the Poet.
Vanity! cry'd the Brethren. — Gross Defilement!
And, so, the War broke out, past Reconcilement.

Young Bays, provok'd, here, drew his wrathful Pen —
Shine forth, said he, my Muse, on those dark Men;
And prove, by Dint of fair Example, whether
Much Goodness is not learnt, by coming hither?

But,

EPILOGUE.

*But, what He teaches, be to Him alone, —
I'll teach a Secret Lesson, of my own.
— Say they, of Plays, that Men learn Nothing by 'em?
I stand the Stage's Champion, and defy 'em!
Who, that has seen, to Night, how I, a Wife,
Gave Counsel, fit to've sav'd my Spouse's Life,
Learns not this Moral, past all Contradiction,
That Disobedient Husbands — meet Affliction?
That He's Most happy, who, his Fetters eases,
And lets his wiser Wife — do — what she pleases?*

*This for our Sex's Fame, his Play produces —
You see all Doctrines have their hidden Uses.
To This—if the bluff Brethren preach Resistance,
Let 'em, as they love Safety, keep their Distance.
For, should we catch 'em, in our wrong'd Dominion
Stiff as they are, we'll make 'em change Opinion.*



Dra

*Dramatis Personæ.***Bellmour.** **Mr. Quin.****Courtney.** **Mr. Bohém.****Bargrave.** **Mr. Ogden.*** **Woodly.****Louisa.** **Mrs. Seymour.*** **Belinda.*** **Three Children.****Time, about five Hours.****Action, uninterrupted.****Place, fix'd; and the Scenes never shifted.****Note. Persons and Speeches, thus * distinguished, are new.**



THE
Fatal Extravagance:
A
TRAGEDY.

ACT I.

SCENE, a Parlour; Louisa leaning on a Couch, in a melancholy Manner—her Children by her.

* Louisa. **C**AN Heav'n be just, and these dear Infants wretched?

What have they done, to merit all this Misery?
Brought forth in Sorrow! nourish'd in Distress!
Their Hopes, Despair! their very Living, Death!
O fatal Fruits of Gaming! baneful Mischief,
That, like Contagion, spreads itself around,
And blasts alike the Innocent and Guilty!
Dire Punishment, that, for a Father's Folly,
Reaches the Souls and Fortune of his Offspring!

[weeping.
Eldest

B

26 *The Fatal Extravagance :*

Eldest Boy. Why weep you, Madam? Heav'n is
(good—and, oft,

I've heard you say, we never shou'd despair,
Nor quarrel with our State.

Lou. 'Tis true, my Boy ———

I was too rash; the Ways of Heav'n are just :
But human Frailty hardly bears with Patience—
Such undeserv'd, and still-increasing, Woe.
To see you helpless, hopeless — Oh !

Eld. Boy. Our Father
Bids us be chearful, and expects Relief.
There comes our Uncle *Courtney* with some News.

S C E N E II.

Courtney, Louisa, 3 Children.

Lou. May they be good ! — † This Speed of your
—(Return

Is kind : but, tell me, Uncle, your Success —

* Say, was my Father, by your Means, dispos'd
To help my *Bellmour* with the hop'd Supplies ?

† — Methinks I read your News in your sad Visage,
And my Heart trembles with prophetick Fears.

* *Court.* Bid These retire ———

Eld. Boy. This bodes no Good.

S C E N E III.

Courtney, Louisa.

Court. Alas !

(him,

† 'Tis, as I judg'd 'twou'd be : His own Wants press

* *Lou.* Ah ! Is the Pow'r of doing Good quite lost ?
Is he unable to afford Relief ?

Court. He wants not Disposition to assist you :
But, bared by generous Actions oft repeated,

He

He now sinks with you. *Bellmour's* wasteful Life,
 † Those boundless Diceings, and voluptuous Riots,
 And this last, worst Adventure of lost Hope,
 (Which has, at once, dissolv'd a Wealth, so vast!)
 * Weighs down his Friends, and makes them share his
 (Fate ;

While others, less concern'd, scarce feel his Suffering,
 or think it merits Pity. Dreadful Case!

Lou. But his late Conduct proves my *Bellmour* chang'd.
 His Fortunes have instructed him to *think*,
 And *Thought* has captiv'd ev'ry madding Passion.

Court. Yet early Vice, by Custom long indulg'd,
 Leaves such Impression, of habitual Ill,
 As finds no Cure, but from severe Remorse,
 And Time's slow Workings.

Lou. Name not *Bellmour's* Vice ———

He has no Vice ——— His very Pow'r is lost,
 Ev'n had he Taste, for Follies. Ruin'd *Bellmour* !
 The Slaves, for whose curs'd Sakes, he stands reproach'd,
 Now, shun his Converse. Villains, who betray'd him,
 Start, when they meet him. Poverty, like his,
 Spreads a Contagion round it. All Mankind
 Cry, " Lord have Mercy," and fly, frighted, from him.
 Did you lay open our incumbent Ruin ?

Urg'd you my Father strongly? Want's cold Hand
 Creeps o'er us; and 'tis, now, no Time for Counsel.

Court. I told him all, and mov'd his utmost Pity.

Still, as he set, to View, your Husband's Failings,

I urg'd his Virtues, and bore down the Ballance.

I prais'd his Wit, his Courage, and Humanity ;

His fine, frank, Spirit, and his generous Nature.

But 'twas lost Hope ! Believe, I know him well :

His struggling Will, to save you, has undone him,

And *Bellmour's* Self wou'd ~~there~~ beg Aid in vain.

28 *The Fatal Extravagance :*

Lou. Oh ! He was never born, to be a Beggar.
Heav'n is too kind to Goodness, to forsake him.
He, whom soft Pity melts, at others' Misery, .
Deserves *himself*, to live exempt from Woe.

Bellmour cou'd ne'er behold a Stranger wretched,
But he partook his Pain, till he cou'd ease it.
How, then, will he support the weeping Anguish
Of three, poor, Children, all undone, by *him* ?

Court. His Good, and Ill, so chequer out his Nature,
That *which* excells is doubtful. Nobly will'd,
His pitying Heart flows out, in generous Purposes:
But, wanting Pow'r, to stem the Tide of Pleasure,
Irresolute, he drives, and floats, to Ruin.
Men must be rigid, and severe, in Virtue !
Serious and noble Aims distinguish Reason !
To live for Taste, is not to live at all.

The Man of Pleasure dreams away his Days,
And dies, to be forgotten. ——— *Bellmour's* Soul,
Had Contemplation bent it to a Byas,
Had giv'n a Point to Fame's proud Pinacle,
And purpled o'er his Name, with deathless Glory !
Now, it lies low, in Dust ! — I wou'd 'twere mine,
To skreen you, from the Storm, that's gathering round
(you :

But I, unblest'd with Pow'r, can *only* wish,
And wonder why the Strong have feeble Wills !

Lou. Oh ! I shall tremble, to behold his Face.
His ruin'd Family hangs on his Heart ;
His helpless Childrens' future Fate distracts him,
And, the once lively, *Bellmour* smiles no more.
Silent, he walks, or stands, with folded Arms,
And still looks down, as if his Soul were Earth.
If e'er, by Chance, his lifted Eyes meet mine,
The starting Tears glare, dreadfully, upon me,

And

And, quivering, struggle, to flow loose, in Sorrow.
Then Sighs, suppress'd by Force, strive hard for Vent,
And heave, and swell, like Earthquakes, in his Bosom.
Groaning, at length, he breaks, in Whirlwind, from
(me,

Torn by ten thousand Pangs, raves, reddens, starts,
And frights me with a dreadful Burst of Passions!
— Oh! Uncle, what remains for Hope to snatch at?
Of all the wide Estate, that, late enclos'd us,
But this poor House is left us — This, too, totters —
Soon Ruin, with his palsied Hand, will seize
This antient Pile, and shake it into Dust!
Not thrice the Worth of all, that, now, is ours,
Will save poor *Woodly* from that fatal Bond
He sign'd, to serve my *Bellmour*. All our Hope
Was in your speedy Journey to my Father.
Woodly must sink, and *Bellmour* cannot bear it!
Bellmour will never live, to sink a Friend.

* *Court*. Yet despair not — Your malicious Creditor
May cancel all the dreaded Obligations,
Or lengthen out his Patience, for the Payment.

Lou. Oh! No — his Heart is stubborn as a Rock.
In vain are Arguments, to move Compassion
In Hearts, to which Humanity's a Stranger.
Pity's a human Passion; Not in him!

Court His Nature will not let him crush a Family,
An old, illustrious, Family! whose Misfortunes
Himself was Cause of, but by Means of Chance.
But, if he can prove obstinately cruel,
And deaf to Calls of Honour, and Distress,
Methinks, his Love may mitigate his Rage,
And make him friendly, for *Belinda's* Sake.

Lou. Name not *Belinda* — *Bellmour* cannot bear
That she shou'd be made one with hated *Bargrave*.

This Opposition whets the Villain's Rage,
And much he threatens, to exert his Pow'r.

Court. Tho' *Bellmour* disapproves the Match propos'd,
Yet Love may bind the cruel *Bargrave* down,
And make the Tyger gentle as the Lamb.

The fiercest Tempers have been tamed by Love.
It strikes the Sparks of Honour, in the Soul,
And blazes up a Reformation there !

Did he not promise, he wou'd try again,
To win her, with Consent ?

Lou. We wait his Coming ———

But all our Hope is, only, short Reprieve,
And, by fair Words, to ward the threaten'd Blow.

Court. Urge you *Belinda* to be seeming kind,
While I inform your Husband how I sped.

Wou'd I had better News, to give him Comfort !

† *Lou.* Look yonder, where, in pensive Grief, he walks,
Unhoping, and disconsolate !

Court. Poor *Bellmour* !

How chang'd, from that wild, noisy, joyful Rioter,
Which all his Friends have known him ! Still extream !

S C E N E IV.

Bellmour, Courtney, Louisa.

Lou. My Life ! my *Bellmour* ! wound not thus my Soul,
I have more Woes to bear, that are my own,
Than my Strength matches——add not thou thy Sor-
(row;
That wou'd o'erwhelm me quite.

Bell. I pray forgive me.
Prison'd in Thought, I could not look about me,
And my Soul miss'd thy Comfort. — I was musing ;

Lou.

Lou. What sad Reflection held you?

Bell. A mournful Wandering!

No matter now ———

Lou. Nay you must tell it me.

Bell. I was considering which of my three Boys,
Some few Years hence, when I'm dissolv'd in Death,
Will act the Beggar best! run bare-foot fastest!
And, with most dext'rous Shrug, play Tricks for Cha-
(rity!

Lou. O! for Heav'n's Sake, forbear, by Starts, like
(This,

To image Horrors, Nature shrinks at Thought of.

Bell. Why, my *Louisa*! 'tis a Wretch's Duty,
To learn to bear his Misery ——— to know it,
To use our selves to poize it, is the Means
To make it easy to us. ——— Yet I'm to blame!
Thou had'st no Share, in any Guilt of mine;
I ought alone to suffer. ——— 'Twas too cruel,
'Twas even unmanly, to afflict thy Innocence!

Court. Oh! Sir, you sooth the Grief you should resist!
As the gross Atmosphere is shook by Tempests,
Which never ruffle the superior Regions;
Mean Spirits, only, buckle under Woe;
It is the great Man's Pride, to combat Fortune,
And rise against Oppression.

Bell. Sir, 'tis true ———

And, I remember, you have oft advis'd it,
While I had Power, to try my Virtue's Proof.
A Man may die, unhelp'd ——— but must not hope
To Conquer, without Arms. ——— Talking of Help,
Will your good Brother lend it? — Speaking Silence!
How could I hope it from him?

Court. Yet despair not ———

A Time may come, when ev'n your Woes shall prove
Great

The Fatal Extravagance.

Great Benefits. Firm Spirits break Misfortunes !
To suffer well 's the noblest Way to Conquest.
On a smooth Sea, the Sailor shows no Skill,
But he displays it *all*, in Hurricanes.

Bell. He wou'd not, sure, neglect to save his Daugh-
(ter,
Had he the Power still left him — Yet Friends, some-
(times,
Are more than Fathers ! A Father *cannot* be
More than a Friend ! — I had a Friend in *Woodly* !
Once he was happy — what he shall be *hereafter*,
He owes to friendless *Bellmour* ! Perish the Name.
To what a stinging Death is he reserv'd,
Who leaves a good Man wretched, whom he *made* so ?
Sir, it wou'd ease me of a galling Pain,
Wou'd you dissolve this disappointed Hope
In *Woodly's* Breast. — 'Twere Sin to nourish it,
Since 'tis unstable — He must know it soon :
Let it be told by any Tongue, but *Bellmour's*.

Court. I'll visit him this Instant. — Do you, mean
(while,
Bravely seek Comfort from a firm Belief,
That Heav'n befriends your Virtues, and will save
(you.
A Hand unseen these Clouds of Woe may clear,
And, into Triumph, turn distracting Fear.

S C E N E V.

Bellmour, Louisa.

Bell. *Louisa* ! I am damn'd, while yet alive !

Lou. Alas ! what mean you to distract me thus
With your wild Startings ?

Bell.

A T R A G E D Y. 33

Bell. Nay, but mark me well, ———

Want's the Damnation of a living Sinner. ———

What have I liv'd for, if I die a Beggar?

Why were my Ancestors renown'd in *War*?

Why, with grave Judges, have they grac'd the Bench,

Or, with wise Votes, the Senate? ——— In *Me*, must
(beg——

Mark that lean Word, *Louisa*! In *Me* must beg

That ebbing Name, which, through a length of Ages,

Has given a Kingdom Honour. Bear'st thou *That*?

How excellent art thou! not to have scorn'd me!

Good Heaven! that Reason shou'd give Madness way,

'Till Man finds Musick in a rattling Dice-box!

And has contracted thrice three thousand Acres,

To the curs'd Compass of a narrow Table!

With what a thoughtless Rapture have I shook 'em!

Hung o'er the Throw! and hurl'd out my Posterity

Pimps, Thieves, or Beggars! ——— But then at last,

This Madman's Hazard of my treasur'd Remnant,

In the wild Lottery of a publick Hope,

Where Reason had no Chance, and Villains govern'd—

Curs'd! groundless Rashness! ——— Tear me Limb

(from Limb,

Some pitying Torturer! To die at once,

Were Comfort e'en in Agony! — But I shall be

Whole Ages, *after* Death, in dying! — Villains,

Dull, pitiless, insulting, dirty Villains,

Will point at some poor ragged Child of mine,

And say, ' There's Pride and Name! there's *Bellmour's*

(Honour!

' There's the blest Remnant of a boasted Family!

Curse the keen Thought! it pours all Hell upon me!

Lou. Still wilt thou, thus, snatch at Despair's wild

(Shadows?

34. *The Fatal Extravagance :*

I thought, the manly Soul cou'd smile at Anguish;
 Woman's weak Mind may bend beneath Adversity;
 But *Bellmour's* Brow, methinks, shou'd wear a Ma-
 (jesty,
 And make Affliction awful.

Bell. Away with Counsel.
 I cannot hear Thee. Thy moving Air! thy Wisdom!
 That lovely Softness, which bewitches round Thee!
 Each Charm, which has a thousand times appeas'd me!
 Now makes me mad! Like Oyl, pour'd out on
 (Flame,
 I tower, in Blaze, and burn with tenfold Fierceness.
 Thy ev'ry Word is Death! Each Look thou giv'st me
 Breaks thro' my Eye, comes rushing on my Soul,
 And shoots sharp Arrows thro' my bleeding Con-
 (science.

Think'st thou, I am so mean, so lost a Wretch,
 That my own Misery stings me? Cruel Woman!
 What *Earthly* Ills can *Bellmour* stoop to fear,
 Which hurt *but Bellmour*? 'Tis true, indeed, *thy* Fate
 I have not learn'd to bear ——— *There*, Grief unmans
 (me;

Thine and thy helpless Infants' Woes rise to me,
 Glare on my Apprehension, like pale Ghosts!
 And point me into Madness!

SCENE VI.

Bellmour, Louisa, Belinda.

* *Lou.* Oh, *Belinda*!

How wretched are we now? No Gleam of Comfort
 Breaks out to cheer our sad, despairing Spirits.

Courtney, return'd, has brought unwelcome News.

Belinda.

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Belinda. I've heard the News, and feel your Woes
(increase.

Wou'd it were mine to administer Relief!

Lou. But one way now remains to save us all—
At least, our Ruin to suspend a while—
And That is in your Power.

Bel. Oh! speak it quickly—
How can I serve your Family?

Lou. By Marriage.

Bell. With whom?

Lou. Ev'n *Bargrave*, our much-dreaded Creditor.

Bell. I'll perish, rather than give my Consent.

Lou. For Heav'n's Sake, *Bellmour*, think of our Di-
(stress,

Think of our Children's State — O think —

Bell. No more.

Thought makes me wild — and shou'd *Belinda* yield,
The only, now remaining Treasure left us,
To such a Villain, I should lose my Reason,
And be a-like, in Soul and Fortune, beggar'd.
Think you I'd buy my Safety with her Ruin?
Barter her Charms, the Honour of our House,
And all the Stock of Glory that is ours,
For *Bargrave*'s Grace? For the precarious Favour
Of short Reprieve from Misery? Were she his,
Were he but once possess'd of her, then All
Were his indeed: Our Ruin wou'd be then
Compleat, and his proud Tyranny triumphant.

Lou. Too resolute and cruel in thy Purpose!
May not Alliance alter *Bargrave*'s Mind?
What will not Love, and Marriage, and Relation,
Do for a Family? — But, *Belinda*, say,
What do'st thou now resolve? Thou see'st our Fate
Is to its Crisis come. We, or must perish,

Or

Or Thou, the friendly Plank, preserve from Wreck,
And bear us to the wish'd-for Hav'n of Ease.

Bel. What shall I say? wou'd my poor Life cou'd
(save you!

My Soul is melted— Sympathy o'erpow'rs
My tender Nature, and I sink beneath
Your Burden: 'Tis my own, and weighs me down.
How hard the Struggle then, in my poor Heart,
To wed with *Bargrave*, and to please my Brother!
Marriage may soften ———

Bell. Whom? The polish'd Steel
Might sooner take Impression from the Dew,
Or gently falling Show'rs, than *Bargrave's* Soul
Receive the Stamp of Vertue and Humanity.
Trust not, *Belinda*, what he says, or swears.
His Heart and Tongue are Strangers. — Dost thou
(weep?

Alas! I've brought my Kindred and my Friends
Into my Sufferings: All involv'd in Woe!
Oh! Wretch! Wretch! Wretch!

SCENE VII.

Louisa, Belinda.

Lou. Unhappy *Bellmour*!
Yet, O *Belinda*, save him, save us all;
Consent to *Bargrave*, suffer yet more Hardship,
To screen a Family from impending Ruin.

Bel. 'Twou'd break poor *Bellmour's* Heart; and yet,
(I own,
There's something in my Bosom pleads for *Bargrave*,
I cannot think him a consummate Villain,
Nor obstinately bent to crush a Family.

He

A TRAGEDY: 37

He comes. *Louisa*, leave us for a while,
I'll try to sooth, and win him to Compassion.

Lou. Heav'n bless you, generous Maid, and with
Crown the Endeavour! (Success

S C E N E VIII.

Bargrave, Belinda.

Bar. Fair *Belinda* here!

And all alone! Madam, I'm now return'd
In Peace to visit you, and *Bellmour's* House.

Bel. Sir, 'tis kind.

Bar. But be it my last Visit
With gentle Terms, if *Bellmour* now refuses
My hearty Welcome to *Belinda's* Love.

Bel. What, tho' he shou'd not give Consent? wou'd
(*Bargrave*

Punish a Family, an old, worthy, Family!
For *Bellmour's* Fault? Or, might not I expect
To win your Mercy, by my own Compliance?

Bar. Madam, I love you, and demand no Dower:
Be that to you sufficient. Join'd to me,
You ne'er shall feel Distress. But he,
'Tis just, shou'd suffer for his Folly. For
His Family, I pity it; but must look
My own sustain no Damage. All Men know
That Charity shou'd still begin at home.

Bel. Ungenerous, cruel, and severe! O *Bargrave*,
Think you I cou'd be easy in your Arms,
Happy amidst your Affluence of Life's Treasure,
Were *Bellmour* and his Family made wretched?
Wretched! by you! my Husband the Destroyer
Of my lov'd Brother's House! Hard-hearted Man!

C

Bar.

Bar. Learn to forget Relations ; and, in me,
Think your self happy, and all other Cares
Center'd and lost. I wou'd not have a Wife
On other Terms.

Bel. O, I shall be undone !

Bar. Nay, Madam, you are free. We are not yet
Contracted and made one. If you disprove
The offer'd Terms, or like not to be joyn'd
To one of my Condition, say so. I
Can find a Help meet for me — One dispos'd,
And glad to have me. True, I think you charming ;
There's none of all your Sex, in my Esteem,
More lovely. But what then ? I cannot whine,
Sigh, pray, and kneel, and cant Romantick Tales.
— I'll leave you to your Thoughts, and try your Bro-

(*ther.*

S C E N E IX.

Belinda.

Bel. Was ever such a Lover ? Wealth and Avarice
Have ruin'd him. O fatal Chance ! I tremble
At thoughts of Marriage ; yet cou'd wish him mine.
O what shall I resolve ? what do, or say ?
I'm rack'd, and pull'd a thousand Ways at once !
Love, Honour, Pity, Pride, Revenge, and Grief,
War in my Soul : Come, Hope, to my Relief ;
Come, like good News to Mortals in Despair,
And put a Period to corroding Care.

The End of the First Act.

A C T

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Bellmour, Bargrave, Woodly.

Bell. JUSTICE! didst thou say?

Wood. Consider, *Bargrave* —

Fortune to *Bellmour* might have giv'n Success —

Bar. 'Tis true — and then my self had been the Sufferer.

Can you upbraid me for the casual Blessing?

Wood. No — but yet think, had you the Loser prov'd, *Bellmour* had scorn'd t'improve his Game so basely: He wou'd not, sure, have urg'd it to your Ruin.

Bar. How know I that? Nay, how cou'd I have blam'd him?

Int'rest shou'd ever be pursued, and sought.

Wood. You'd make the World believe you sordid. *Bargrave* is not so base, nor so reduc'd, (Sure, That he must, for his Int'rest, crush his Friends. You have Abundance —

Bar. And you'd have me squander it —

Wood. No — but be human, merciful, and kind: Let Charity dispose you to be friendly To the Distress'd, who suffer by your Means. Think how, by simple Accidents —

Bar. No more.

Woodly, you are his Surety — and you strive (me. More for your own Sake, than your Friend's, to move

Wood. Then I shou'd merit all that Woe, from which
 I beg you'd save this Family. O, Sir,
 Calmly consider what you do, nor bring
 Destruction on the Guiltless. If, at Game,
 You've had Success, thro' no dishonest Means;
 Assert your Innocence, by Acts of Goodness.
 If 'twas but Chance, regard his Debts as casual;
 Nor set a Value on them, they deserve not.
 The Wise are never proud of Fortune's Smiles,
 Nor think her Boons their Property and Blessing.
 A noble Soul courts Offices of Mercy,
 And glories more in being good, than mighty.

Bar. Woodly, I've long been patient. Now 'twere vain
 To urge me to protract my Day of Grace.
 Besides, I'd not have you officious —

Wood. Sir,
 I cannot be so, in my Friend's Behalf.

Bar. Then blame me not, if you repent your meddling.

Wood. I know the Obligation I have sign'd —

Bar. Think also on the legal Consequences.

But, Sir,
 Talking of Mercy, how can you expect it,
 Who, obstinately, and with proud Disdain,
 Refuse me fair *Belinda* for a Wife?

Bell. 'Twou'd ill become me to advise my Sister
 To wed the Man who has undone her Brother.

Bar. But, by that only Means, you can be safe —

Bell. Think you I'm fall'n so low, to make Exchange
 So vile and base? To barter her dear Life,
 Her Beauty, and her Happiness, for Safety!
 No, sordid Wretch, I rate her Virtues higher.

Bar. Then you despise my Favour —

Bell. As thy self.

Nor seek I Pity, but for this my Friend,

And

A TRAGEDY. 41

And a poor beggar'd Family. My self
Is in your Power : Do with me what you please.

Bar. yet tamely think, before 'tis late to court me.

Bell. Say, can you give me back my old Possessions,
Restore my lost hereditary Grandeur,

And native Honesty, which first you tempted ?

Set me at Rights — make me my self again —

When that is done, then be thy self a Convert —

Shew thy self lovely, honourable, just —

Be what thou should'st be, worthy of *Belinda* —

Then ask her freely — woo her in thy Charms —

And, doubt not, I will stand thy faithful Friend.

Bar. Mere Cant, and Passion! — *Bellmour*, be advis'd —
Consult your Interest. Reason lies in that !

Int'rest is Reason ; and when Reason leaves

The human Soul, a Beggar's not so naked.

Bell. Deluded Wretch ! thou never yet knew'st Rea-
Or it has left thy Soul to brutal Wildness. (son,

Reason's the Beauty, Excellency, and Glory,

Of human Kind. 'Tis —

Bar. *Bellmour* ! preach no more.

When next I see you, you'll accept my Terms,

I lose my Time. Farewell.

Wood. Yet, Sir, have Patience —

S C E N E II.

Bellmour, Woodly.

Bell. *Woodly* ! my Friend ! my suff'ring, ruin'd Friend ;

(For thou wilt soon be such) what shall, what can I say,

To give thee Satisfaction, Ease, or Comfort ?

All, all is lost ! my Money, Land, and Credit,

My very Hopes are gone. But what are these ?

These were but poor Considerations all ;
 And all my own : But I have squander'd more,
 Undone my Friends, and thee of Friends the best !

Wood. Bellmour ! I thought I had not been a Stranger,
 Or e'en a common, customary, Acquaintance,
 Who does a Favour, and repents it done,
 Loves its Acknowledgment, and wou'd have Men
 To know it, and its Circumstances. What
 I've done for thee, was done as for my self ;
 For what am I without a Friend ? and what
 Avails my Substance, if it cannot serve him ?
 I've done too little, and you owe me nothing.
 Wou'd I cou'd lend you more !

Bell. Alas ! I've drain'd
 Your Purse, sunk deep your Credit and Estate,
 And now your Person ——— Oh ———

Wood. Forbear, my Friend ;
 If that's in Danger too, I am prepar'd.
 There's nothing I'd not suffer for thy Sake !
 No Risque, too dangerous, to be run ! And, sure,
 Were yours the Pow'r, or had you Chance, like mine ;
 You'd serve me with your Life. I knew your Friendship
 In prosperous State : 'Twas confident and free,
 Familiar, plain, disinterested, artless !
 'Twas perfect ! And I'd have you be assured
 I think myself behind you, and indebted.
 Your Merits challenge more than I can give,
 Or do, or say, to serve you, and your House.
 To serve the Worthy, and to share their Pain,
 Is to distinguish Natures ——— It exalts us !
 A noble Mind feels Recompence, in Pleasure,
 And Pleasure flows from Consciousness of Virtue.
 To share your Happiness wou'd less delight me,
 Than to be able to promote, or make, it.

Bell

A TRAGEDY. 43

Bell. Prodigious Man! excessive Strength of Soul!
In what great School of Virtue, and of Honour,
Have you acquir'd this sovereign Perfection?
The World is not accustom'd to such Dealings.
Your Sentiments have Pow'r to still my Passions,
And set my banish'd Reason on its Throne.

Wood. Fear not, my Friend—but moderate your
(Complaints:

Some lucky Turn may make good Fortune yours.

Bell. My only Comfort is, in having Friends,
Who, by dividing, make my Burden lighter.
Yet not, so much, my own Misfortunes press me,
As generous Love— Oh! *That* o'erloads my Nature.
Your Suffering heaps the Anguish I endure,
And makes my Debts immortal. While my Mind
Holds its Existence, it must be indebted
To unbought Bounty, and Compassion.

Wood. Still,

You will oppress me with a Load of Gratitude.
Shall I possess a Good, and you be wretched?
Curse on that Soul, that cannot hazard *All*,
To save his Friend, and succour suffering Virtue.
Let Misers preach Oeconomy and Thrift——
They understand not Life, who are not generous,
Where Love and Merit challenge their Regard.
There's no Profusion in a well judg'd Favour.

Bell. Oft have I try'd you in a prosperous State,
And found you faithful— But Adversity
Uses to bring Estrangement in its Train.
Few know the very Faces of the Wretched.

Wood. What Woes can make a Man forget himself?
Such is a Friend— he lives but in his Friend—
The Bond of Nature cannot be more firm:
Adversity does search its very Soul,

And

And brings to Light its Qualities and Virtues ;
It sets it off with a redoubled Lustre.

How firmly I am yours no Words can tell—

Bell. Your Actions are rhetorical. By these,
Your Mind, to me, lies naked. I behold
My self, deep, rooted in your faithful Bosom.
Too black a Guest, to enter such a Lodging !
You fondle Vipers, *Woodly*— Trust me not——
I've stung my Wife, my Children, and my self !
Preserve your self, tho' guilty I shou'd perish.

SCENE III.

Bellmour, Woodly, Courtney.

Cour. *Bargrave*, so often baulk'd, now vows Revenge,
And Arguments are vain to bring him back.

Bell. Is he then gone ?

Cour. He is --- and much enraged
At the Repulse he met with from *Belinda* :
But most repents your obstinate Aversion
To the propos'd Alliance. Shall I (oft he questions)
Give *Bellmour* Fortune, who denies me Favour ?

Wood. I'll try again to pacify his Wrath——

Cour. Or sink beneath his Burden.

Bell. O, my Friend,
Approach him not. 'Tis dangerous——

Wood. Then I'll go.

Welcome the Danger, that may save my Friend,

A TRAGEDY. 45

SCENE IV.

Bellmour, Courtney.

Bell. Did he then threaten *Woodley*?

Court. Doubt it not.

Woodly, he says, must pay your Debts, or lie
His Prisoner.

Bell. Oh!

Cour. Sir, if I might advise,
Consent to this Alliance.

Bell. 'Twere in vain.

Bargrave wou'd not forgive my Friend, nor me,
Ev'n were *Belinda* his.

Cour. Yet might indulge you (happen?
With farther Time; who knows what then might

Bell. *Courtney*, persuade me not. Fix'd as a Rock,
Here let me stand— I'll never give Consent.

Cour. Suppose *Belinda* marry him without it——

Bell. She will not, sure.

Cour. What if she loves him still?

Bell. Impossible.

Cour. *Belinda's* but a Woman.

Passion will work— and Interest sways the best.

Now, granting, you shou'd never be a Gainer,

Say, is it just to oppose your Sister's Good?

Bell. Good! do you call it? Can it be a Good,
A Blessing, to be wedded to a Villian?

What are his Riches? Do they make him virtuous,

Excuse his Crimes, or buy him from the Devil?

I tell you, *Courtney*, I'll not see her ruin'd.

Are we not miserable enough already?

Let us not be more wretched. It is Time,

Now

46. *The Fatal Extravagance:*

Now, to grow frugal, and to manage well
Our little Wealth, and poor Remains of Honour.

S C E N E V.

Bellmour, Courtney, Belinda.

Bel. O Bellmour! I have err'd.

Bell. In what, Belinda?

Bel. In sending *Bargrave* hence, enrag'd— I fear
He'll make us all repent his Disappointment.

Bell. Heav'n wou'd disprove Repentance of that sort.
Let Wretches, loaded with such Guilt, as mine,
Rue their ill Conduct. You are to be prais'd,
Who, by Discretion guided, kept your Honour
And Peace of Mind.

Bel. Alas! I feel no Peace:
My Mind is all Distraction and Despair.

Bell. I, I'm the guilty Cause of all your Sufferings;
You mourn for my Misfortunes and Distress:
For, sure, you do not grieve for Loss of *Bargrave*.

Bel. Ah, my hard Fate!

Bell. What means my Sister? Speak;
Wish you, unsaid, the Language that I counsell'd?
Did not your Heart approve your Tongue's Discourse?

Bel. I own the Frailty of my Nature. Tho'
Bargrave is base, and obstinate, and cruel,
I wish him mine, ev'n tho' I shou'd be wretched.

Bell. The News does sink me deeper. Oh!

Bel. My Brother, [He offers to go.
Hear me! 'tis not, that he's my Heart's Desire—
Heav'n knows I hate his Nature, nor esteem
His Person dear: But when I think of you,
Your Wife, your Children, Family and Fame—

What

What cou'd I not be willing to sustain?

Bell. Then 'tis but Pity and Compassion still;
A generous Sympathy in our Distress!
I thank Thee for't. Yet seek not our Relief;
Nay, wish not for it, by inglorious Means.
Let us endure the worst, and fall together.

S C E N E VI.

Courtney, Belinda.

Cour. *Belinda*, nothing now remains but Ruin.
Our only Hope was in your gentle Usage
Of that malicious Creditor. Indeed
'Twas cruel to repell him, tho' your Brother
Urg'd it--- to a Family most cruel!
Tho' *Bellmour's* Soul abhors him, cou'd not you,
By winning Ways, avert the fatal Blow,
Or lengthen out the Time? Now, all must perish.

S C E N E VII.

Courtney, Louisa, Belinda.

Lou. As when some shipwreck'd Wretch discerns a
And, hopeful, thither beats his watry Way, (Rock,
But, trembling, while he climbs its rugged Brow,
Slips, and falls back, and dies amid the Waves;
So I, thro' Misery, mark'd a Dawn of Comfort;
But, ah! how soon has Disappointment sprung!
And plung'd me deep again in dark Despair!

Bel. Sister, I've wrong'd Thee. O, I cou'd tear my
(Flesh,
My Heart, for what I've done. Wou'd *Bargrave* yet
Return! O *Courtney*, find him. But 'twere vain.

He

He own'd the Marriage cou'd not make him spare
 The generous *Woodly*: He, alas! must suffer.
 And what torments me most-- (*Louisa*, pardon)
 What most corrodes and preys upon my Vitals,
 Is his Indifference. Were he but in Love,
 Fierce, barbarous, as he is, I cou'd consent;
 For *Bellmour's* Sake, ev'n forfeit all Life's Ease,
 And hug my Misery: But, alas! he's cold,
 Hard-hearted, and indifferent; he courts,
 As if he scorn'd me; and cou'd be delighted
 More by Repulse, than by a kind Reception.
 This, this is Torture!

Lou. O unhappy we!

My Heart will break: I cannot bear its Anguish.

Cour. Despair not; Heav'n may yet afford Relief.
 What if I should invite him back? And say
Belinda now repents his late Repulse? (*Heav'n*

Lou. O Sister, speak the Word. Who knows, but
 May change his Purpose, and convert his Nature?
 Besides, your Prudence, Wisdom, Love and Charms,
 May help to soften his inhuman Heart.

Bel. Go: I'll comply, tho' Misery prove my State.

Cour. Nor will I lose a Moment.

S C E N E VIII.

Louisa, Belinda.

Lou. Now you're kind.

May Heav'n reward your Kindness, and inspire
 Your Hearts with mutual Love!

Bel. Alas! poor *Bellmour*!

The News will weigh him down.

Lou. 'Twou'd sink him more

A T R A G E D Y: 49

To see his Friend, his Wife and Children ruin'd.

Bel. What's my poor Life, in Ballance for a Family?
I'll hazard all. Let worst that can befall me.

Lou. Again, a Gleam of Comfort breaks thro' Clouds
Of Sorrow, on my Heart. May Angels guard you,
Dear, lov'd, and loving, Sister. I shall long
For Courtney's coming.

S C E N E IX.

Belinda.

Bel. Were my Soul inspir'd
With Pride and Scorn, like some of female Kind,
I wou'd I brook being made a Tool, a Slave!
A Property! to purchase Good for Others.
But most I'd shew my Anger and Resentment
Against the Man, who woos me with Indifference.
It galls my Heart, to think my boasted Charms
Make but such faint Impressions on his Mind,
And have not Force to melt him down to Love.
O I shall rage, and lose my Reason quite.
Now I cou'd suffer ev'ry Woe of Life
To have him mine — to make his Heart a Conquest.
Twere Glory to o'ercome a Soul, so stubborn.
— But why this Earnestness? this firey Keeness?
Sure, 'tis not Love. Alas! it is, it is.
What shou'd it be? It will reveal itself.
The Flames of Love, in narrow Prison pent,
Ungovern'd, blaze, when once they find a Vent.
Complaints break naturally from Breasts distress'd.
So bursts the Ball, where Air is much compress'd.

The End of the Second Act.

D

A C T

A C T III.

S C E N E I.

Bellmour, Louisa, 3 Children.

* *Bell.* **W**HY did I marry? to beget a Race
Of Beggars, hopeless, helpless in their
(Misery !

Naked, abandon'd, trod on, for my Sake !
What will not Beggary make 'em do ? turn Bawds,
Or Pandars — shocking, melancholy, Thought !
The Devil scorns to be so base : His Pride
Disdains th' inglorious Slavery. But my Sons
Are ignorant, silly, despicable Beggars.

Lou. Bellmour, forbear Reflections so afflicting
To those you love. See ! you have cut the Hearts
Of these poor Innocents ———

Bell. Ay, innocent indeed ———
And, therefore, I more criminal and curst.
— Come near, my Boys, and look upon your Father.
D'ye know me ?

Eld. Boy. Sir, we, sure, must ne'er forget
So good a Father.

Bell. Yes, I'd have you all
Forget me now. I've been the worst of Fathers.
You know me not, if you believe me good.
I've turn'd your Foe, and gam'd away your Birthright.

Eld. Boy. Heav'n will provide for us. You us'd to
To trust its Goodness.

(teach us
Bell.

Bell. Heav'n is in your Soul, —
 O that I were a Child, like you unspotted !
 But I'm grown old in Vice, and black as Hell,
 Unfit for Heav'n, unworthy of Society.
 Bear me, some Tempest, to a desert Land,
 Where Print of human Feet was never found ;
 There let me range with Birds and Beasts of Prey,
 Thro' gloomy Caves, and Rocks, o'ergrown with Moss.
 There let me groan and weep my Horrors out,
 Grow wild and savage, as my Fellow Brutes,
 Till Death uncase this wretched Soul, and send it
 To everlasting Torment and Despair.

Lou. For Heav'n's Sake, *Bellmour*, moderate your
 (Temper.

Eld. Boy. Sir, you affright us — Sure, you will not
 (leave us —
 Or shall we go to see those uncouth Lands ?

Bell. Moving Innocence ! — Retire, my Boys, retire.
 I cannot see their Sorrows.

S C E N E. II.

Bellmour, Louisa.

Life's a Burden —

I cou'd even throw it down : But something whispers
 That my black Crimes have heap'd a future Hell
 Of Vengeance, for my Punishment.

Lou. O *Bellmour*,
 To see you thus dejected and despairing,
 Makes me think manly Virtue all a Jest.
 My female Weakness cou'd no more be bent
 Beneath Adversity.

Bell. My Crimes, my Follies,

52 *The Fatal Extravagance :*

Hunt me, *Louisa*; and where'er I go,
Conscience still hallows Vengeance in my Ear.

Lou. Poor *Bellmour*.

Bell. Poor indeed! a Monument of Woe!

Beggar'd alike in Fortune and in Soul!

Lou. Yet hope good News. *Courtney* may bring it
He comes ————— (to us,

S C E N E III.

Bellmour, Courtney, Louisa.

† Why look you pale, good Uncle?

Court. To bring unwelcome Tidings to the Wretched,
Gives the sad Teller half the Hearer's Woe.

Bell. Friendly Preparative! What follows next
Can be but *Woodly's* Ruin!

Court. He's undone! —————

Lou. Unhappy *Bellmour*!

Court. Near your House I met him,
Hemm'd by a swarthy Guard of licens'd Villains,
The Law's grim Blood-Hounds. With rapacious Talons
They dragg'd him on, in merciless Serenity,
To shut him from his Hopes, in joyless Prison!

Bell. Oh!

Court. At short Distance, near the Sycamore,
That marks the Turning to that now-fall'n House
Of this poor Gentleman, I saw his Lady,
Wild, with a Storm of Grief! Her Hair dishevel'd!
And her loose Robes, blown, careless, by the Wind!
Struggling, with weeping Servants, to break free.
Fain wou'd she follow him, to share Restraint:
But by superior Force held back, and hindered,
With straining Eyes, she kept him long in View;

And,

A TRAGEDY. 53

And, when a gushing Flood obscur'd her Sight,
Still more to lengthen out a last, sad, Look,
She wip'd away the Tears, and gaz'd again!

Lou. Dreadful Description! — Close it here, good
(Uncle!

It cuts too deep, and wounds my *Bellmour's* Soul.

Court. No more remains to tell, but, that his House
Is fill'd with Ruffians, his rich Goods torn down,
And his griev'd Wife, and Children, roam, unshelter'd,
Without a Home, to succour them.

Lou. O guide them hither.

Let me, with open Arms, fly to receive them,
And strive, if possible, to give them Comfort.

Bell. *Louisa!* — As thou would'st preserve my Life,
Bring not their Grief too near me. — My melting Soul
Flows into Air, as I but *hear* their Misery:

To see it, wou'd distract me. — *Said* he nothing?

Court. Marking me, as I turn'd my Face aside,
He call'd, and counsell'd you to save yourself,
By sudden Flight — Since other Ruffians, brought
By *Bargrave*, your malicious Creditor,
Will presently be here, on the same Purpose.
As for my Fate, said he, bid him not mourn it:
To fall for *Bellmour*, wou'd have giv'n me Joy,
Had *Bellmour's* self not fall'n.

Bell. He falls, indeed!

Court. Now, as I enter'd, *Bargrave*, just arriv'd,
With his infernal Crew, besets your Gates.
A barbarous Triumph glows on his proud Cheek,
And from beneath his Brows o'erjutting *Low'r*,
Malicious Insult grins, in hollow Ambush!

Lou. Now, *Bellmour!* thou art lost! — immediate
(Ruin
Will swallow Thee, and Me, and our dear Children!

54 *The Fatal Extravagance :*

All! All! must sink together. — Teach us, good Uncle!
Which Way to fly — What Measures to pursue.

Court. The Doors, fast barr'd, are guarded by your
(Servants;
And you may thro' the Grove, escape, unseen.

Bell. No, let him enter. — This *Bargrave* taught
(me Vice,

And counsell'd even the Adventure, that undoes me!
He wrongs the Devil, who makes himself the Punisher
Of Ills, which he excited! Justice acts wisely!

Oh! She's *not* blind. — She chuses a fit Moment,
And throws him on my Vengeance. Let him enter,
Bring he as many Lives, as he has Crimes,
May Curses catch me, if he 'scape my Hand!

Lou. As thou lov'st me, *Bellmour*! be not rash.
Shou'dst thou add Murder to our other Woes,
How wretched shou'd we be?

Court. Persuade him rather,
Sooth him to Pity. Wou'd he free your Friend,
And add some Weeks of Liberty for Tryal,
What Succour may be found; you've many Friends:
Who who knows what unhop'd Aid may rise to save
(you:

Bell. No, *Courtney*; Friendship rises but with Fortune,
And sets when Men go downward. Yet I thank you.
Rage had obscur'd my Reason. — Say to *Bargrave*,
I have an Offer for his private Ear.

SCENE

SCENE IV.

Bellmour, Courtney, Louisa, Belinda.

* *Bel.* O, my Brother,
Shall those be ruin'd, whom I might preserve?
Give your Consent, I'll strait comply with *Bargrave*,
And strive to save you all, tho' I shou'd perish.

Lou. Kind Sister now!

Bell. Too generous Maid! Forbear —

Court. I fear 'twere now too late, by Terms like these,
To win him. Int'rest only can prevail.

Bel. Yet let me try —

Lou. For Heav'n's Sake, *Bellmour*, yield.

Belinda may avert the threaten'd Blow,
And *Woodly's* Liberty procure. Who knows
But *Bargrave* only takes this cruel Means
To force your Approbation and Consent?
Or shou'd *Belinda* fail, all you wou'd say
Remains — You then might sooth him as you pleas'd.

Court. There is no Harm in Tryal. Be advis'd.

Bell. I'll ne'er consent.

Court. Yet let her hold a Parly,
And seem at least to yield. Some Good may happen.

Lou. Nothing but Ruin else.

Bell. Then I'll withdraw.

Court. I'll bring him in.

Bel. *Louisa*, leave me too.

SCENE

S C E N E V.

Belinda.

O Love, thou bitter, poisonous, Sweet! be gone,
Or work Effects, which, but a God, can do,
To crown my Wishes, and preserve my Honour.

S C E N E VI.

Bargrave, Belinda.

Bar. At length you think of yielding! Madam; now
I'm cool'd, I've chang'd my Mind. Not Love, but
Employs my Thoughts. (Justice,

Bel. Sir, were your late Addresses all in jest?
Meant you to mock me by your boasted Courtship?

Bar. No, Madam, I was serious; tho', I own,
I was not much in Love. But your Disdain
Has chang'd my Mind.

Bel. Then now 'twere vain to yield ———

Bar. She comes.

Nay, Madam, I've a good Opinion
Of your Desert ———

Bel. If I have any Charms,
Or merit your Conceit, why, for my Sake,
Relent you not? why spare you not my Brother?
O cruel *Bargrave* ———

Bar. Madam, you refused
To win my Pity: You provok'd my Rigour.
Repent you now?

Bel. Hard Fate, thus to be forc'd
To own my Passion!

Bar.

Bar. Ha! am I belov'd?

Is your Heart mine? Say, durst you not reveal
The Truth before? Impossible: 'Tis Art,
Mere Art! But I'm no Cully. You'd, in vain,
By subtle Means, endeavour, now, to alter
My purpos'd Justice.

Bel. Not, if I comply'd? (hate it:

Bar. You mean, by Marriage— Now, I've learnt to
Compliance wou'd be fruitless, in that Way.
But wou'd you gain my Favour to your House,
Another Way remains ———

Bel. What mean you, *Bargrave*?

Bar. Then must I speak my Meaning? Why, in
Let me enjoy thee. (Brief,

Bel. Shocking, barbarous Man!

Bar. Think of it well. You know my Pow'r. And,
Compliance, of this Sort, can only save (now,
Your Brother and his Friend. You, by Degrees,
May pay their Debt: I'll take it out in Kind.

Bel. Thy Soul is all Infection.

Bar. 'Tis no matter ———

My Body's sound, and that's enough for you.

Bel. I shall go mad. Presumptuous, impious, Man!
Is it for This I've cherish'd secret Love?
For this Return, a Tendernefs conceal'd
Within my Heart for thee, by All abhorr'd?
This then, at last, the Intention of thy Courtship?
O Patience, Patience! if there's such a Virtue,
I want it, Heav'n. Nay, rather lend me Thunder—
For such a Wrong, so heinous an Affront,
Deserves a Wrath, almighty as thy own,
To blast this Wretch, and hurl him into Hell.

Bar. Temper your Rage, and take my Terms. Per-
You'll next repent you did not. (happ

Bel.

Bel. Furies seize him.

Hast thou not other Crimes enew to damn thee,
Besides thy Lust? And must I meet thy Flame?
Are all the Brothels rifled? O thou hast thrown
A Wild-fire in my Brain!

Bar. Let Nature work.

When you grow cool, you will not be so cruel.
Think of your Brother's desperate Condition —
Think of his Family. Consider, Hope
Is fled: This only Plank remains to save him.
Now, I'm so much a Servant to thy Beauties,
'Thy Body once enjoy'd, his Friend is free;
And each new Favour shall deserve another.
If Lords shou'd pay so dear for every Capering,
'Twou'd try the Back of their Estates. What say'st thou?

Bel. No more, inhuman Wretch —

Bar. Nay, most humane,
You shou'd have styl'd me, for my Condescension.
Think but how cheap you buy your Brother's Safety.
The World will praise thee for thy Composition.
'Alas! good Soul! they'll say, 'twas generous Pity—
'Love for her Brother, and his sinking Family.
'What Woman wou'd not venture such a Trifle
'To save her Friends?' Poets will spread thy Name
In Ballads, sacred to thy kind Compliance.
Methinks, I see Posterity instructed
In thy fam'd Story — Mothers teach their Children,
And grieve that the Example was not theirs.
I shall have all the Blame: But I'll endure it,
For thy dear Sake. Let them blaspheme my Conduct—
To give thee Peace, and do thy House a Courtesy,
I'll run a thousand Hazards. Now, what say'st thou?

Bel. That thou'rt a Monster, and my Soul abhors thee.
I'd sooner meet a Basilisk, and be one.

Bar.

A TRAGEDY. 59

Bar. I've done. Now, to my Business. Soon you'll
(*rue*

Your stubborn, senseless, Virtue — when you see
Your Brother dragg'd to Prison, this old House
Despoil'd, *Louisa* and her Children
Turn'd out to Beggary, naked and forlorn —
Your self a piteous Object, but unpitied —
Nay, more to sting and torture thee, ev'n I
Will spread it round the Country, thou'rt my Whore,
My turn'd-off Harlot, my detested Leavings.
Then wilt thou wish, in vain, thou had'st indeed
Consented, and preserv'd thy House and Fame.

Bel. O Villain! Villain! Dar'st thou prove so base?
Thou wou'dst outdo the Devil's self in Mischief!
Lost and undone! I see no Succour now!
No Hope remains! All, all must perish soon!

O *Bargrave*! *Bargrave*!

[*Weeping.*

Bar. Wisdom will correct thee:
E'er yet I leave thee quite, be won to Softness.
I'll give thee some few Moments to consider,
And, mean while, hear what *Bellmour* has to offer.

SCENE VII.

Belinda.

Bel. Consideration will but heap my Griefs.
Wretch that I am! slighted! insulted! lost!
What shall I do? Comply? Or be reveng'd?
Reveng'd! How? O that I cou'd be reveng'd!
I'd lose a Limb, I'd die, to be reveng'd!
But, Oh! my Brother! a poor, ruin'd, Family!
Tho' for my own Misfortune and Distress,
My Stock of Tears were spent, the Thoughts of *His*
Were

60 *The Fatal Extravagance:*

Were able to create a weeping Spring
Within my barren Head.

S C E N E VIII.

Bellmour, Belinda.

Bell. I know thou lov'st me.

Poor Maid! I shall endeavour to cherish Life
If thou lament'st me thus: So rich a Comfort
Will make me with I might ev'n live a Wretch.

Bel. O wou'd my Life cou'd satisfy your Creditor!
But, barbarous Man! he courts me to Dishonour,
And tempt the Murder of my very Soul! (declare

Bell. Ha! what did'st thou say? Does *Bargrave* then
That Lust, not Love, inspir'd his boasted Courtship?

Bel. He does — and offers to enlarge your Friend,
And save your House, at Price of my Undoing.

Bell. And thou cou'dst die (did not I hear thee say
To save us from Destruction! (so?)

Bel. Twou'd be Pleasure.

Bell. In this great Love, thou wound'st my inmost
Suffer for me? why thou art innocent. (Soul.
I have provok'd the Rigour of the Law,
And dare obey it manly. But, alas!

My Wife! my Children! and my Friend! — O Sister!
Cou'dst thou with any Thing, but Death, relieve us—

Bel. Nothing cou'd be too precious for thy Safety.

Bell. Death's a devouring Gamester — sweeps up all.
But cou'dst thou spare an Eye, or Arm?

Bel. Most gladly,
Wou'd *Bargrave* rest well satisfy'd.

Bell. And can'st
Thou grudge to save us by a gentler Means?

Bel.

Bel. O name it —

Bell. Did not *Bargrave* promise Safety,
If thou'dst comply with his unhallow'd Terms?

Bel. Ha! Sure, you wou'd not tempt me to be base.
You, who refus'd Consent to lawful Wedlock,
Will never yield to shameful Prostitution.
You do but try my Virtue.

Bell. O *Belinda*!

I know the Kingdoms of the World contain not
Riches enough to tempt thee to such Shame:
But I'm thy Brother! thy poor, ruin'd, Brother!
A Brother, whom thou lov'st! and who loves thee!
Who has done much, in prosperous State, to serve thee!
I know it makes thee grieve to hear me speak it —
But condescend to lose thy Virgin Virtue,
And I shall love thee better for't — We'll live,
Live, and repent together, pray and weep,
Till Heav'n hath pardon'd all.

Bel. O never, never.

Sure, you'd not have me stain'd!

Bell. Where? who shall see
A Blemish in thy Face, or Fame? Thy Beauty
Will be the very same. Thy Speech, thy Person,
The same they are.

Bel. O Rebel to all Virtue!
To all Religion! Could I think that *Bellmour*
Wou'd ever tempt me thus to Sin?

Bell. Not *Bellmour*,
But what he's made — 'tis his Condition tempts you.
— Yet tho' thou scorn'st to buy me from Destruction,
On *Bargrave*'s Terms, thou wilt not sure survive me.

Bel. What means my Brother?

Bell. To prevent, by Death,
His cruel Purposes.

Bel. What ? kill thy self !

Bell. My self, my Wife, my Children, all shall die !
To disappoint his Malice, and Men's Scorn.

Bel. You fright me, *Bellmour* —

Bell. 'Tis resolv'd. Then, tell me,
Wilt thou die with us ? shall I now dispatch thee,
Unspotted, and so valiant, hence to Heav'n ?

Bel. Oh, will you murder ?

Bell. Do you tremble ?

Bel. Not

At Terror of your Sword, or horrid Death :
But at the Horror will affright thy Soul
For such an Action.

Bell. It will be most glorious,
To make thee die a Martyr, undefil'd.
Shou'dst thou live longer, thou might'st grow corrupt,
And be unfit to die. Then, say your Pray'rs,
And stand prepar'd for Heav'n.

Bel. O *Bellmour*, *Bellmour* !
Is there no Remedy, but Death ? and by thy Hand ?
I'm shock'd. What shall I do ? I'll give Consent —
I'll yield to *Bargrave*, and redeem you all.

Bell. Yield, didst thou say ? Consent to thy Dishonour ?
Thou merit'st not to live. [*Stabs her.*]

Bel. O I am slain !
It had been well if any other Hand
Had giv'n the Wound. I did but seem to yield,
Only to gain some Time, in Hope you'd change
Your fatal Purpose, and prevent this Guilt.

Bell. Ha ! did but seem to yield ! then I was rash.
Alas ! I did but try thy Virtues. When
Thou saidst thou wou'dst consent to *Bargrave's* Terms,
I thought thee lost, a Strumpet in thy Heart,
And fear'd that soon thou wou'dst make good thy
Words.

Forgive

A TRAGEDY. 63

Forgive me, Sister — O forgive, and live
A little longer. Passion hath betray'd thee
To this dire Wound. Yet know I not, if I
Shou'd most rejoyce, or mourn, since thou art virtuous.
Thou'rt ripe to be translated from the Earth,
To make a Cherub.

Bel. Heav'n forgive my Brother.

SCENE IX.

Bellmour, Courtney, Belinda.

Court. What bloody Chance is this? *Belinda*, speak —
How came this Wound?

Bel. I drew the Weapon to it:
Heav'n knows my Brother lov'd me. Now, I hope,
The cruel *Bargrave* will not vex me more.

Court. O Death, be not so hasty. — *Bargrave* waits
Impatient for you, *Bellmour* —

Bell. And for her
To be his Whore — I'll meet him with my Fury,
And send the *Tarquin* to his destin'd Hell.
Mean while, good *Courtney*, as you love me, join
Your Help, in what I now propose to do.
See dear *Belinda* in her Bed be laid —

Bargrave will follow soon — Ask me no Questions.
Sister, farewell. Thy feign'd Consent hath brought
Thy Happiness more early, than it might
Have else arriv'd, and sav'd some Guilt to me.

Bel. Farewell.

Court. O gracious Heav'n, what new Distress
Rises each Hour, in this unhappy House?

Bell. *Courtney*, I've much to tell thee. Lead her hence.

Pray for me, Sister. When thou'rt dead, I'll kiss,
I'll worship thee.

S C E N E X.

Bellmour.

Now, keen Revenge, inspire me.
My Soul's on Fire. I shall consume to Ashes,
If I not cool my Fury with the Blood
Of that unrival'd Villain. This poor Roof
He'd, last of all, dishonour with his Lust,
Shall be his Tomb. The Reasons of his Death
Will justify the Deed to future Times.
Murder is not so horrid as his Crimes.

The End of the Third Act.



A C T

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Courtney, Louisa.

† *Court.* **T**HE pointed Sword, that by a slender
(Hair)
Hung o'er the Head of *Damocles*, was Shadow
To *Bellmour's* solid Danger.

* *Lou.* O, good Uncle!

Now, say, what shall we do? what Method take?
Belinda dead, now *Bellmour* is distracted
With Anger, Grief, Revenge; and, in his Madness,
Utters such horrible, outrageous Words,
As none but evil Dæmons cou'd inspire.

Court. Is he not gone to Rest in his Apartment?

Lou. He is: But, Oh! he cannot there be safe.

Bargrave, enrag'd, vows he'll break up the Door;
Nor, shou'd he spare him, is my *Bellmour* safe
From his own self.

Court. Let us then force him hence ———
Steal him from Ruin, tho' against his Will.
I fear for him, for you, for all the House,
Some common Mischief will involve us all,
Such unremitting Madness has possess'd him.

Lou. Or if, by Chance, it ceases, still he feels
New Cares return with his returning Sense; b' now you
For to behold with Tears domestick Ills,
Ourselves the only Authors of our Miseries,

Is sure a Torture worse than being mad.
 When *Bellmour* raves, and Frenzy rules his Brain,
 Senseless of Ill, he joys for what we mourn.
 But when his wandering Reason is return'd,
 And with it Melancholy, Grief, and Pain,
 Doubly distress'd, he gives us double Sorrow.
 His Groans, his Words, declare some brooding Ill
 Sits deep at Heart, and heavy on his Brow.
 O Uncle, visit him, and, by your Wisdom,
 Try to appease, or give him Comfort.

Court. Time

Is precious now. What Groan was there ?

Bell. Oh ! *[From within.]*

Lou. 'Twas his wailing Voice.

Bell. Oh ! Oh !

Court. Again ! how wretched is his Grief !

Bell. My Wife ! my Boys ! Oh !

Lou. Let me fly to meet him.

Court. He comes. Poor *Bellmour* !

S C E N E II.

Bellmour, Courtney, Louisa.

Bell. Poor indeed ! alike

In Soul and Fortune poor ! a very Wretch !

— *Courtney*, my only now remaining Friend,
 (For *Woodly's* sunk) wou'd but your Arm oblige me—

Court. How ?

Bell. Stretch it forth, and let poor *Bellmour* die.

Court. O, Sir, compose your Spirit, and consider.
 You wou'd not have me murder —

Lou. O my *Bellmour* !

For Heav'n's Sake, do not thus add Grief to Grief,
And

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And multiply our Sorrows: O submit
Your Passion to your Reason.

Bell. It is lost,

Bankrupt and beggar'd! — O pernicious Bargrave!
O Serpentine in Subtlety and Sting! who first
Milled me, and now triumphs in my Woes.

—Let me destroy him—Why d'ye hide him from me?

Court. Provoke not Heav'n, by bringing more Guilt
And be advis'd to reason with him calmly. (here,
I've talk'd with him, and find some Ground to hope
He may prove merciful, and free your Friend.

Bell. Think you he'll free my Friend? Then all
(were well.

I yet cou'd love him. 'Tis my Friend's Distress
O'erpow'rs me — not my own! I'd not, from him,
Beg Favour for my self; my Soul disdains it.

Mean is the Wretch, who begs for Life with Pain,
And lengthens out uninterupting Woe.

To him each Day is joyless, as the former,
Adds a poor Space to Life, and keeps off Death.

Lou. Yet, my *Bellmour*, think of us, of your three
O, I beseech you, by our first Embraces, (Children —
By all you love, O leave us not unfriended.
Remember me, if ever thou wert pleas'd
With me, or with my Diligence to please,
If I had ought of Charms, or thou of Love.

Lou. Dear, dear, *Louisa*.

Court. Shall I bring him to you?

Bell. Do.

† I will instruct my swelling Indignation
To cool, and settle, like a Courtier's Passions.
What cannot Interest teach us?

S C E N E III.

Bellmour, Louisa.

Bell. Leave me, *Louisa!*

I wou'd not have thee blast thy innocent Eyes,
 With Sight of such a Monster.--- Nor brook I well,
 That thou, who hast been taught to love Sincerity,
 Shou'dst hear me flatter Infamy!

Lou. Do but think

'Tis for their Sakes, whom most you wish to succour,
 And you will find it easy. Farewell! he comes.

S C E N E IV.

Bellmour, Bargrave.

Bar. So, Sir! I find, you make your House your
 (Garrison!

Bold sowl-fac'd Centinels admit, with Caution,
 Whom you vouchsafe your Pass to.--- 'Tis great, indeed!
 Girt, Sovereign-like, within your Palace Walls,
 The Law must *beg* Admission! * And, when enter'd,
 People must *wait* for Audience. † But the Pride,
 With which your State o'erlook'd me, will instruct
 Till I find Means to reach you. ——— (me,

Bell. I sent not for you

Thus to revive old Hatred. 'Twas my Meaning,
 To set before your Eyes the spreading Misery,
 From whence a Week's short Respite may, perhaps,
 Free *Woodly*, and my self, nor do you Wrong.

Bar. Oh, Sir! no doubt, 'tis likely, that Seven Days
 Will pay a Bond, which twice Seven Months, and more,
 Has

Has drawn no Interest from you! --- *Woodly* may claim
 Some little Pity. — He's a suffering Tool,
 Who fasts to feed your Riots. But for you,
 No Plea bears Influence. What a Mass of Wealth
 Loaded your Youth! the Toil of careful Ancestors!
 And, how it is consum'd, let Thousands tell,
 Whose lifted Eyes and Hands proclaim their Wonder.
 I dare not whisper it. --- Men wou'd think me mad:
 And laugh to think, that the once liberal *Bellmour*
 Is grown a Niggard, now; and, like a Miser,
 Whines for a Day of Grace. --- And swears 'twill ruin
 To pay his Creditors. --- Name it no more. — (him
 Should it get Wind, twou'd lower your towring Top-
 (Sails,
 And lose you many a Cap, and Country Shout,
 As you ride thro' the Villages.

Bell. Insulting Wretch!

It grates my inmost Soul, to suffer this, (speak,
 But my Friend's Fate depends on't. — You seem'd to
 As if you pity'd *Woodly*. — Give him Liberty:
 And let me fill the Place, to which you've sent him;
 I ask no more — For my own Miseries,
 Perhaps, they merit not. — I'm sure, they scorn,
 What Pity thou can'st give them. —

Bar. Oft, I remember,
Woodly, with Zeal for holy Texts, transported,
 Wou'd preach, and cite Divinity. — Dull! Dull!
 How cou'd he miss that Caution, which forbad him
 To be another's Surety? What comes after,
 He now, perhaps, has learnt. — And will remember
 When, next he talks, to edify. — * Besides,
 The Scorn I've met with from your self and Sister,
 Forbids my Mercy to a Friend of yours.
 Nor Wife, nor Whore, you'd grant me!

† *Bell.* Now, break, my Rage ———
 Off, mean Hypocrisy ! ——— I'll make thee hear me,
 In Words, which match thy Malice. Think, low
 (T raytor !
 How I, first, learn'd that Guilt, with which, but now,
 Thy Tongue reproach'd me ! Who, but the Villain Bar-
 (grave ?

Bar. Ha ! Villain ! said you ? [Offering to draw.

Bell. Yes, the Villain *Bargrave*. ———
 Touch not thy Sword. — Should'st thou unsheath it, here,
 Thy Guardian Devil, too weak to save his Minister,
 Should rise, in vain, betwixt us !

Bar. I'll hear thee out. ——— (me,

Bell. Who, but thy self, spread all those Snares about
 Which, first, entangling, next o'erthrew my Virtue ?
 Who stain'd the native Whiteness of my Soul,
 And spotted it with Follies ? Think, how this Bond,
 Was fraudulently, and, by shameful Arts,
 Won from my clouded Reason, when the Fumes,
 Of madding Wine had warm'd my yielding Fancy,
 Fit for a Knave's Impression ! — Hast thou Humanity ?
 And dost not feel a Ruin thou hast caus'd ?
 Hast thou Reflection ? and canst thou sleep, unstung,
 By guilty startings, and remorseful Dreams ?
 Or have the Fiends, that haunt thy gloomy Bosom,
 Unhumaniz'd thy Heart ? fear'd up thy Conscience ?
 And left all Devil within thee ? ———

Bar. Now take Breath :

And hear me tell the Effect of this fine Pleading.
 I find my self, with all these black Endowments,
 Your Master, and your Scourge. But that I scorn thee,
 I could be angry. ——— Mark this silent Witness :
 Look on this Bond. ——— And curse the woeful Hour,
 That gave thy Friend, and thee, to my Disposal.

I'll

I'll leave our Wives, to scold the Quarrel out,
While I seek Vengeance, not from Words, but Action—

[He attempts to go out.]

Bell. By Action! didst thou say? I thank thee, Bar—
Thou hast instructed me.—That fatal Bond (grave!)
Shall never rise, in Judgment, against Woody.

[Drawing his Sword, and putting himself before the Door.]

Just Heav'n, that hates Oppression, points a Way,
To ease my Wretchedness of half its Load,
By cutting thro' that Chain, that binds my Friend.
Now, if thou dar'st defend thy Villanies,
Unsheath thy Sword, and to this guarded Door,
Force thy wish'd Passage, thro' Breast of Bellmour.

[They fight, and Bargrave falls.]

Bar. Curses consume that all destroying Hand,
'Spite of my wish'd Revenge, thou wilt escape me:
No Heir survives, to put the Bond in Proof,
And Woody, and thy self, are free again. [He dies.]

S C E N E V.

Bellmour, Courtney, Louisa.

Court. What have you done? I fear'd this rash Effect,
Of Rage, but half suppress'd — and waited near:
But an Attempt yon Bloodhounds made without,
To force an Entrance, call'd me off too fatally!

Lou. Was this, my Bellmour! Speak, was this the way,
To ease our Wretchedness? Oh! this black Chance
Sinks us still deeper, cuts us off from Comfort,
And we can never, now, be happy more!

Bell. Courtney! 'twere vain to wish this Act undone—
Scarce can it claim Repentance, --- Secret and sudden,

Let

Let me intreat thee, to convey this Parchment
 [Taking the Bond from Bargrave's Pocket.]
 Into my Woodly's Hand. — Say how it happen'd :
 Tell him, whatever Fate may do with me,
 I'm blest'd to give him Freedom.

Court. Guard the Doors well. — There's Danger near :
 And I'll not leave you long.

S C E N E VI.

Bellmour, Louisa.

Lou. Fly ; for Heaven's Sake, be gone.
 One Hour's Delay prevents Escape for ever.

Bell. What wou'dst thou have me do ?

Lou. Let me disguise thee. —
 Then thro' the Grove, haste ; and, in some poor Cottage,
 Entreat a short Concealment. — There, I'll find thee,
 And we'll consult Relief from all our Woes.

Bell. Fix'd as my Fate, I stand, unmov'd, to expect
 I'll not stir hence, by Heav'n. (it.

Lou. Oh ! do not swear !
 Think, how my Peace of Mind, my Hope, my Misery,
 Depends on thine. — Thus, on my Knees, I urge it.
 Thou, being free, may'st find a thousand Ways,
 To succour us ; but if thou fall'st, a Family,
 A lost ! a friendless Family ! falls with thee.
 Oh ! if I ever was belov'd by Bellmour,
 If all my Pray'rs, my Vows, my Tears, can move him,
 Let him but grant me this. — Let him but leave me,
 Rain then a world of Woes upon my Head !
 Let Want, Reproach, Contempt, and all Life's Agonies,
 In ceaseless Bitterness of Soul, afflict me,
 While thou art safe, if I but let one Sigh,

One

One *Breath* of Discontent escape my Lips,
Curse me *thy self*, and make me lost, indeed.

Bell. Excellent Woman! — rise. — To see thee *thus*,
Is Torture beyond bearing!

Lou. I will not leave thee. —

Here, at thy Feet, thus humbled, as that Dust,
Which I shall shortly be, when I have lost thee,
Here will I grow for ever, till thou grant'st
This only Pray'r I make thee —

Bell. Thou bid'st me fly:

What would'st thou I should fly from?

Lou. Danger and Misery.

Bell. With whom then must I *leave* that Misery?
Must not thy self, and those Three friendless Wretches,
Whose Being I was Cause of, and expect
Aid and Protection from a Parent's Hand;
While I escape, must you not all be left?
Hell glows in that hot Thought! be left, expos'd
To all the Miseries, which thou would'st have me
Fly, like a Coward from, and leave for Innocents,
Who owe 'em to my Baseness! no! — My *Louisa*,
Wretch, as I *have* been, I'm not fall'n *so low*!

Lou. [*rising*] Lost, Lost, for ever!

Bell. No, there's a Judge on high, (thee,
Who sees, and loves, thy Goodness. — Let me entreat
To give my Sorrows way, for a few Moments.
A solitary Thought! a Turn, or two,
Uninterrupted, in the Gallery,
Will teach me to resolve, and then I'll call thee.

Lou. Angels assist and guide thy silent Reasonings,
And, from this Labyrinth of Woes, unwind thee!
Dismal our Prospect! yet all *may* be well!
Heav'n cannot err — oft guides us in the Dark —
And, when we least expect, affords Relief.

As

The Fatal Extravagance:

As thro' black Storms of Wind, and driving Rain,
 Short, Sunny Beamings break the harrass'd Main,
 So, thro' deep Sorrows, Glimps of Comfort rise;
 And spread smooth Heavens before the Sufferers' Eyes.

The End of the Fourth Act.

ACT

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Bellmour, *alone, pensive.*

Bell. **W**H Y shou'd I pause! Nothing can be a
 (Crime
 Which puts a stop to Evil. A thousand Men
 May have been poor as I, — and yet liv'd happy!
Miseries, we make *our selves*, are born with Ease;
 But he, who beggars his Posterity,
 Begets a Race, to curse him — Profuse in Ills,
 He, propagating Ruin, with his Name,
 Entails Descent of Anguish! — Every Scorn,
 Which wrings the Soul of any future *Bellmour*,
 Whom Want shall pinch the Bones of, Ages hence,
 Will mark, with Shame, my unforgotten Grave,
 And reach my guilty Soul, where e'er it wanders,
 — If to give Misery to those, to whom
 We once gave Life, is an inhuman Crime,
 How can it be a Sin, to take Life back,
 And put an End to Misery? To live,
 Is to be rack'd, if Life must still be poor:
 For Poverty gives up the Wise Man's Worth,
 To the Contempt of tasteless Ignorance.
 Oh! — Cou'd I feel no Misery, but my own!
 How easy were it for this Sword, to free me,
 From all that Anguish, which embitters Life?
 But, when the Grave has given my Sorrows Rest,
 Where

The Fatal Extravagance :

Where shall my miserable *Wife* find Comfort ?
 Unfriended, and alone, in Want's bleak Storm,
 Not all the Angelic Virtues of her Mind,
 Will shield her, from the unpitied World's Derision.
 Can it be kind to leave her so expos'd,
 And, while I sleep in Death, not dream of *her* ?
 Better a thousand Times, to lead her *with me*,
 Thro' the dark Doubtfulness of deep *Futurity* !
 Whate'er uncertain Fate attends, hereafter,
 It can but be the worst of what is bad,
 And that's our State, already. — It shall be done !
 But how ? That asks some Thought — Death, in it
 Comes soft, and sweetly, as an Infant's Sleep, (self,
 When Nature, unalarm'd, expects it not.
 From those dear, destin'd Breasts, the pointed Steel,
 Must draw no Blood, to stain my blushing Hand ;
 Lest my Soul start, and that seem Cruelty,
 Which I wou'd fain think Pity. — Hark ! the Time
 (presses me.

[*Loud knocking without.*

What if I use the unwounding Aid of Poison ?
 I have at hand that Sovereign Remedy,
 For all Diseases, Want and Woe can plague with.
 Mix'd with some unfear'd Draught 'twill gently mur-
 (der :
 Bear off Death's painful Edge, and, in sweet Slumber
 Swim soft, and shadowy, o'er the misty Eye-ball.

S C E N E. II.

Bellmour, Louisa.

Lou. Will you forgive me, if officious Love,
 That anxious Pain I feel, till you are safe,
 Obtrudes

Oberudes my Zeal, perhaps a few short Moments,
Before you wou'd have wish'd to be disturb'd?
Yon Villains grow impatient for Admission,
And scarce your Servants guard the Gate against them.
Storms of bold Oaths, and horrible Reproaches,
Mix'd with loud Thunderings, and the Threats of Law,
Make my Heart tremble, and have forc'd me hither,
Forc'd me to urge you, by all the Ties of Love,
Of Interest, Honour, Hope, and future Happiness,
To fly this dangerous Roof, and save us All.

Bell. I thank thy gentle Care — It is resolv'd.
I have bethought me of a Means, to evade
The Malice of my Fortune — 'Twill be a Journey,
A little longer, than thy Love could wish it;
Yet not so far, but we shall meet again.

Lou. Oh! be the Distance wide, as Pole from Pole,
Let me but follow thee, and I am blest'd.

Bell. It shall be so, *Louisa.*

Lou. A thousand Angels
Spread their Wings o'er thee, and protect thy Steps.
Now thou art kind! — But the dear little ones,
Shall they go too?

Bell. All! all! shall go!

Lou. Haste then,
Let us be gone: — my bounding Heart leaps joyful,
And I shall smile again — But ah me! *Bellmour!*
They are so young! so tender! it is impossible,
They should travel with us?

Bell. Moving Innocence!

My strong Heart bleeds within me at her Accents!

[*Aside.*

A few short Steps will lodge us in a Place, [*To her.*
Of Rest and Safety — we shall have Leisure there,
To weigh our future Hopes, and seek fit Means,

To

78 *The Fatal Extravagance:*

To our wish'd End. — *Courtney* will soon return;
Said he not so?

Lou. He did, and we'll inform him
Of our new Purpose, and begin our Flight.
I'll make Provision, such as best befits
Our Haste, and our Distresses. [*She is going.*]

Bell. Stay, *Louisa*!
Those boasted Cordials, the *French Marquis* sent me,
Gave I to thee, or no?

Lou. You spoke of such —
But still forgot to give 'em me — and now,
They're not worth Memory —

Bell. Nay, now, most useful!
Their Virtue is reported sovereign,
Against the Body's Toil, or Mind's Disturbance.

S C E N E III.

Bellmour, Louisa, 3 Children

Lou. *Courtney* stays long!

* *Bell.* Unhappy Boys! my Sons,
Be happier than your Father, O were I
Happy as you are, in not knowing Ill!
A Life of Ignorance is far the sweetest;
To know, is to know Pain: A thoughtless Life,
If it has less of Joy, has less of Grief.
— But I delay — 'Tis the Physician's Part,
Not to abound in Words, but work the Cure.

S C E N E

SCENE IV.

Louisa, 3 Children.

Lou. I fear some fatal Project fills his Mind.
Oh! how I tremble with the Apprehension!
— My little ones! say, are you now prepar'd
To stretch your tender Limbs? to beg your Bread
From House to House? to lie on the cold Earth?
Endure the Storms? and bear reproachful Tongues?

Eld. Boy. Will not our Father then be with us?

Lou. Yes.

Eld. Boy. Then there's no Cause to fear. He will take
We shall not want good Lodging and Provision. (care

Lou. Alas! thou little know'st Adversity.
Anon, I will be with you.

SCENE V.

3 Children, Courtney.

Eld. Boy. Our good Uncle!

Court. Where is your Father?

Eld. Boy. In his Gallery Closet.

Court. Strange that a Man shou'd linger thus in Dan-
I'll trace the Gallery round, and urge Escape. (ger.
Few Minutes more may spread a Crowd of Eyes
On ev'ry Side, and fatally prevent him.

SCENE

S C E N E VI.

Bellmour, 3 Children.

Bell. My baleful Hand, has mix'd the deadly Draught,
 To give it as a Cordial — Give it ! *whom?*
 Start from thy burning Orb, thou conscious Sun,
 And chill thy self to Frost at my black Purpose.
 Am I a Parent ? a Protector ? Lover ?
 Or has this Devil, that heaves about my Heart,
 Transform'd me to a Fiend ? *He has ! He has !*
 Chain him, some Angel, Millions of Fathoms down ;
 Heap him with Mountains, least, he rise again,
 And in a Husband's and a Father's Breast,
 Brew horrid Murders ! — I am my self, once more —
 Now let cool Reason's undistracted Search
 Answer my bleeding Soul, *which* dreadful Ill
 May best be born by Nature — To leave our Friends,
 To grinding Sorrow, Poverty, and Scorn,
 With Sense of his not feeling *any* Pain,
 Who gave them all ; — or, to quit Life together,
 And, wanting Pow'r to *bless*, make it *some* Merit,
 Not to leave *Curses* to surviving Innocence !
 I'm mad again — Reason her self betrays me,
 And whispers, that the first is *Cruelty*,
 And Murder grows a Mercy ! —

S C E N E VII.

Bellmour, Louisa, 3 Children.

Lou. Found you the Cordial ?
 Your little Wanderers are ready dress'd

To

A TRAGEDY. 81

To act the Pilgrim with us; perhaps 'twill aid
Their fainting Spirits, yet untried in Hardships.

Bell. I cannot move — my Feet, bound down by
(Nature,

Rebell against my Heart — Oh! If one Moment,
One short *Thought* longer, she oppresses me, thus,
With melting, innocent, *Talk* — I shall grow soft,
Yield her to *Want*, and live to be a *Beggar*. [*Aside.*

Lou. Still you are doubtful —

Bell. No — no — I'm fix'd — Oh! Nature! [*Aside.*

I left my Closet open, — on a Table,
In that Gold Cup, which was my Father's Present,
When thy first Favourite Boy's last Birth-Day came,
Thou'lt find the fittest Cordial — I try'd 'em all,
And what seem'd properest, for the Boys and thee,
Waits, in that Cup, thy tasting. —

Lou. Come, my Boys —

Let's taste this boasted Cordial —

S C E N E VIII.

Bellmour.

Bell. Be firm, my Heart!

Stop thy big Beat! Thaw, thaw this curdling Blood,
That, thro' my Icy Veins, creeps cold as Death,
And freezes in its Passage. — Where is *Louisa*?
But a few Moments, and she is no more!
Now! now! the unsuspecting Innocent
Lifts that last Cup — Now, now, she tastes a Draught,
That snatches her, for ever, from my Sight,
And robs me of her Comfort! Never more,
Shall her sweet Voice *enchant* me! Never more,

Shall

Shall her soft *Eyes* look fondly into mine,
 And *shine* with swimming Languor — Never, never,
 Will her unwearied Wit beguile my Cares,
 Or hush me *more* to Peace, when Passion shakes me!
 Open, engulf me, and conceal my Shame
 Befriending Earth! — Or, from thy yawning Depth,
 Stream up a Night of Gloom, to blot out Memory,
 And darken o'er Reflection! — I feel my Blood
 Cool, and grow *thick*, as melted Lead flows heavy,
 And hardens in its Motion — A little longer,
 And I, who have a *Heart*, already Marble,
 Shall petrify *throughout*, and be a Statue!

Lou. My Life! my *Bellmour*! [Within.]

Bell. Ha! 'tis her Voice that calls me —
 It sounded not reproachful.

Lou. Look, look, my *Bellmour*! [Within.]
 These little Strugglers will not quit the Cordial,
 But sip it to the Bottom —

Bell. Torturing Horror — [Aside.]

S C E N E IX.

Bellmour, Louisa with an empty Cup.

Lou. How cou'd you be so rigid, not to come,
 When I twice call'd you? 'Twou'd have been a Scene
 Of Pleasure, to observe with how much Eagerness,
 The little Wranglers quarrel'd for the Cup,
 Which, having drank, my self, I brought to *them*.
 I bid 'em *taste* it only — and told the Praters,
 It was their Father's Present: But that Word
 Transported them, to lift their pretty Hands,
 And brought a *War* about me —

Bell. Furies tear me —

Lou.

A TRAGEDY. 83

Lou. Did you not give Permission they should taste
E'er they began the Journey! (it?

Bell. Alas! *Louisa!*

A long, long, Journey, is, indeed! begun,
But endless, as Eternity — Thy self,
And those dear Infants — are *poison'd* by that Cordial.

Lou. Poison'd! by *thee*? Thou sayst it but to try me!
If 'twere thy Wish that I should die, thy Love, —
At least, thy *Pity*, wou'd have given some *Warning*.
Death is a dreadful Journey, and requires
Much length of Preparation. —

Bell. By those Charms,
Which I no more must gaze on, and be bless'd,
Thou can'st not live an Hour — A last, long Sleep
Will steal, with cold Advances, o'er thy Beauties,
And those two beamy Suns, which sparkle on me,
Anon, shall set in Death — Even, while we talk,
The eternal Shade will rise, at once, between us,
And sever us for ever.

Lou. Dreadful Contraction!
Of that short Span, which at its longest Stretch,
Was much too narrow, to allow me Scope,
To speak, or look, or think, my Love, for thee:
What shall I say? — A thousand tender Thoughts,
Struggle, at once, for Vent. — I cannot speak —
Death is too hasty — I have yet, *undone*,
Unspoke, unthought, a thousand weighty Things!
O! Heaven! my Little ones! — Let me fly to them!
Have I so short a Time, to gaze upon them?
Yet ne'er must see 'em more! — I cannot leave thee.
What shall I do? — O bring my Children hither;
Fly with 'em to my Arms! — Dear, dying Innocents!
Oh! *Bellmour! Bellmour!* Why has this been done?

Bell. That we might baffle Woe, and die together —

And

And leave no Beggars of our Race behind us.

See! my Louisa! I have a faithful Guide.

[Drawing a Dagger.

That will not let me lose thee ——— [Stabs himself.

Lou. Oh! cruel Bellmour!

What hast thou done? ——— Now, I am kill'd indeed!

Help, help, — Oh! Uncle! what a dreadful Scene

Are you return'd to?

SCENE XI.

Bellmour, Courtney, Louisa.

Court. I have heard it all ———

And had not this conceal'd, undreamt of, Dagger,

Prevented my near Vigilance, had sav'd

Unhappy Bellmour. ———

Bell. Not unhappy, now ———

We slide, united, from the Woes of Life,

And Want's too slow to reach us. ———

Court. Mistaken Man!

The Hand of Heaven, however, from mortal Eyes,

Obscur'd in Clouds, still points direct at Justice!

Not thy three Children, nor thy guileless Wife,

But Thou, alone, art fallen! whose single Crime

Drew down a single Vengeance! ———

Lou. Alas! what mean you? ———

Bell. Thou little know'st the deadly Means I us'd,

If thou conceiv'st me frustrated ———

Court. Hear, then, with Wonder ———

And, trembling, mark the mazy Paths of Providence.

Seeking you on the Gallery's Garden Side;

I, in your Closet, spy'd a late fill'd Cup,

With a small Vial near it. ——— To the Neck

There

A TRAGEDY. 85

There hung a Label. — By the Name, inscrib'd,
I saw, with sad Surprise, it had held Poison.

Concluding, you had newly mingled it,
With that rich Draught it stood by — From a Win-
I threw it on the Garden — refill'd the Cup, (dow,
Without its deadly Mixture — and stood, conceal'd,
To watch what happen'd — when *Louisa* came,
And snatch'd it thence, I follow'd her, unmark'd,
Pleas'd to have been a Means, to intercept
Her's, and her Childrens Death.—The rest you know
(too well.

Bell. Angels surround thee, with unceasing Vigi-
And, for this Friendship, ward off every Evil. (lance,
Oh! I have err'd! —

Lou. Oh! too, too, partial Blessing!
Faint Sweet, with more than poisonous Bitter, mix'd.
Now, *Bellmour*, tell me, was it not a Crime,
To distrust Heav'n? *else* thou had'st liv'd — and then
We had All, perhaps, been blest —

* *Bell.* My Guilt is dreadful!
Beneath its Burden, let me crawl from Life.
[Falling gently down.

Where are my Children?

S C E N E XI.

Bellmour, Courtney, Louisa, 3 Children.

Come, my Boys — come near me —
And take your Father's last, and sad, Farewell.
Oh! I have wrong'd you! left you Heirs of Misery!
I've liv'd too long — O stubborn Heart-strings, break.
I am to blame alone! O slow-pac'd Justice.

S C E N E XII.

Bellmour, Woodly, Courtney, Louisa, 3 Children.

Wood. Amazement strike me ! what do I behold ?
My Friend ! my *Bellmour* ! in the Pangs of Death —
O cruel Spectacle ! amazing Sight !

Bell. O *Woodly* ! great, good, Man ! let me embrace
(thee,
And, in thy Arms, breathe out this blacken'd Soul.

Wood. I came, transported with surprizing News ;
But, ah ! how fleeting are the Joys of Life ? —
† By a young Kinsman, landed from a Ship,
That left her Consort scarce a Day behind,
But now, I learnt, that your long absent Brother,
Whom all his Friends thought many Years was dead,
Returning rich, from the remotest East,
Dy'd but in Sight of Land — and has bequeath'd
His whole heap'd Wealth to *Bellmour* —

Bell. Eternal Pleasures flow from sacred-Friendship.
Heav'n ! I adore thee — thou art too indulgent !
Wou'd I had trusted thy unbounded Goodness !
Thou best can'st clear thy mystick Dispensations,
And make Confusion end, in beauteous Order !
Punish'd with this Severity of Justice,
I feel, and own, thy Mercy. — Now, live, *Louisa* !
Live, and be happy — best of Friends, farewell —
See to my Boys — and oh ! — forget your *Bellmour*.
[Dies.

Lou. Oh !

Wood. Alas ! she faints — this sudden Turn of
(Terror,
Rushes too strong to be withstood by Nature.

Let's

A TRAGEDY. 87

Let's call her Women to her Aid, and watch her,
Till Time, and Thought, by slow Degrees, bring
(Comfort.

Court. From this sad Story, let Ofservers know,
That early Riot ends, in lasting Woe,
Mean, and ignoble, Pleasures, break the Mind,
Unnerve the Judgment, and the Reason blind,
Till Heav'n o'ertakes us, with some dreadful Fate,
And the touch'd Soul grows sensible, too late.

[Curtain drops.]



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